

LISTENING STRATEGIES & NOTE-TAKING

Multilingual Student Support (MSS)
Camosun College



INTRODUCTION

Listening is a stressful skill because there's no written record and you can't control the speed.

But there are some things you **CAN** control

GOALS

1. Consider **STRATEGIES** for listening to **LECTURES**: Before, During, & After
2. Learn some **GENERAL TIPS** for improving your English listening



THINK ABOUT...

- What's a challenge for you when you are **LISTENING** in class? What helps you to catch the lecture information?
- Do you take notes? What works for you with note-taking? What's something you need to work on?





FAST
TALKIN'
TEACHERS

What to do during lectures?



FAST TALKIN' TEACHERS WHAT TO DO?

- **Before** = prepare well; **During** = take notes; **After** = review notes and fill gaps
- Use an effective note-taking format
- Listen for signal words: focus on main ideas
- Learn short forms in English
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Ask if you can record

BEFORE THE LECTURE

- Prepare well (Read textbook & take notes, do practice questions)
- Focus on main ideas/ key terms
- Connect reading/notes to learning outcomes
- Bring questions to the lecture: instructor/slides may answer them



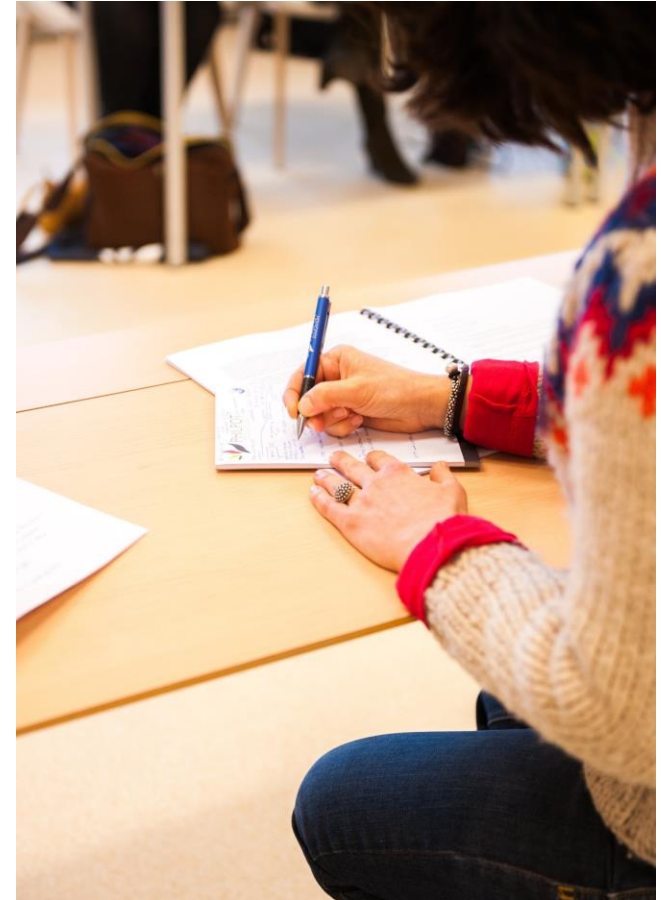
DURING THE LECTURE

Take notes – only main ideas & key details

- Main focus is listening not writing
- Where are main ideas? Signal words, slides, repeated terms

Key nouns / verbs (can fill out later)

- Save time with abbreviations
- Don't panic if you miss something
 - Later: check slides, classmates, ask Qs



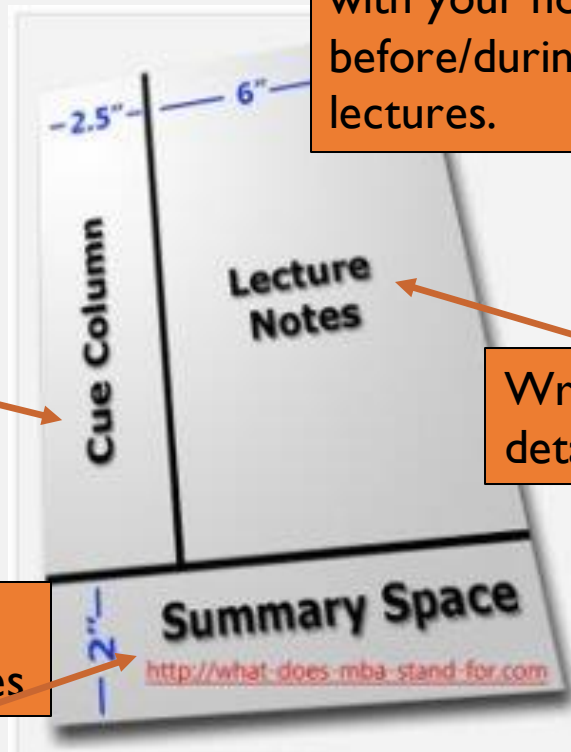


AFTER THE LECTURE

- Review notes (a) right after class & (b) later
- Gaps? → Ask instructor, classmates, check slides
 - Transform notes = helps with memory
 - Flashcards, mind map, study page, practice questions...
 - Summarize (Your words: explain to friend)

NOTE TAKING STYLES

- Cornell



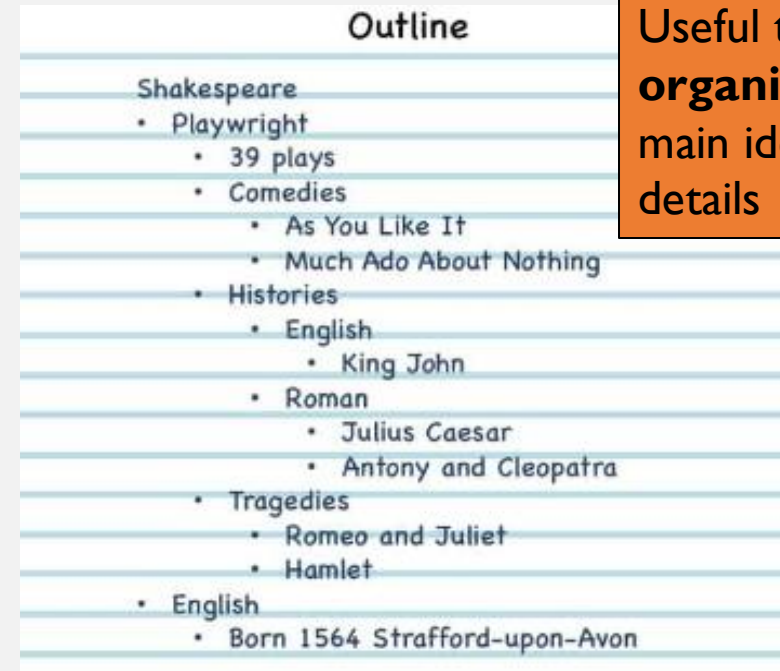
Write questions,
key terms, ideas

Useful to **engage**
with your notes
before/during/after
lectures.

Write main ideas,
details, examples

Write brief
summary of notes

- Others: Outline, Mind Map...



Useful to show
organization:
main ideas &
details

- Outline
- Shakespeare
 - Playwright
 - 39 plays
 - Comedies
 - As You Like It
 - Much Ado About Nothing
 - Histories
 - English
 - King John
 - Roman
 - Julius Caesar
 - Antony and Cleopatra
 - Tragedies
 - Romeo and Juliet
 - Hamlet
 - English
 - Born 1564 Stratford-upon-Avon

SIGNAL WORDS

INTRODUCING

- **New topic:** 'Okay', 'Now', 'Let's move on to...'
- **Key point:** 'Most importantly', 'key', 'main', 'especially', 'significant', 'Pay attention to'
- **Opinions:** 'I think', 'As far as I'm concerned', 'The way I see it'

CONNECTING IDEAS

- **Contrast:** 'On the other hand', 'However,'
- **Additional point:** 'Furthermore,' 'Moreover', 'Besides'
- **Results:** 'Therefore,' 'Thus,' 'Consequently'
- **Restating or Defining:** 'In other words,' 'That is,' 'Or'
- **Similarity:** 'Likewise'

SOME COMMON ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. With / without | 1. w/ w/o |
| 2. Results in, leads to / increases, goes up | 2. → ↑ |
| 3. Minimum / maximum | 3. Min / max |
| 4. Regarding, about | 4. Re |
| 5. Including / excluding | 5. Incl / excl |
| 6. Department | 6. Dept |
| 7. Export / Import | 7. Exp / Imp |
| 8. Because | 8. b/c |
| 9. International | 9. Intl |

SHORT FORMS – HOW WE REALLY SPEAK

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. howzigoin? | → | 1. How is it going? |
| 2. wendjebayertexbook? | → | 2. When did you buy your textbook? |
| 3. kenyeplayeninstrument? | → | 3. Can you play an instrument? |
| 4. yegonnawatchTVtenight? | → | 4. Are you going to watch TV tonight? |
| 5. yewannadothehomework? | → | 5. Do you want to do the homework? |
| 6. didjemoveteVictoriacuzitswarm? | → | 6. Did you move to Victoria because it's warm? |



EVERYDAY
LISTENING

Making improvements

IMPROVING LISTENING

- Use free listening websites
 - [Esl-lab](#), [British Council](#), [ello.org](#)
 - Practice contexts you need
 - lectures, meetings, phone calls...
- Talk with supportive conversation partners
- Learn the 'grammar' of intonation





TALK WITH SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATION PARTNERS

- Practice speaking and listening with supportive friends and small groups
- Supportive speakers
 - Are **patient** and happy to explain, repeat, or rephrase
 - Speak at a comfortable pace
 - Monitor their talk for challenging slang and idiomatic language
 - Give you **time** to process what they said and respond to it

LISTEN TO THE 'GRAMMAR' OF INTONATION

In writing, we use punctuation to show organization and connections between ideas.

In speech, we show organization with our voice: **intonation** and **pauses**. Focus on the **END** of sentences/parts:

1. A speaker's voice goes **UP** to show yes/no questions, comprehension checks, and uncertainty (like a question mark = ?)
 2. The intonation goes **DOWN** to show completion or certainty (like a period = .)
 3. The intonation is **FLAT/UP** and **LENGTHENED** to show I'm not finished/will continue (like a comma = ,)
- Pauses are "spoken" periods (.) and commas (,). (~ one second)

CONCLUSION

Take action!

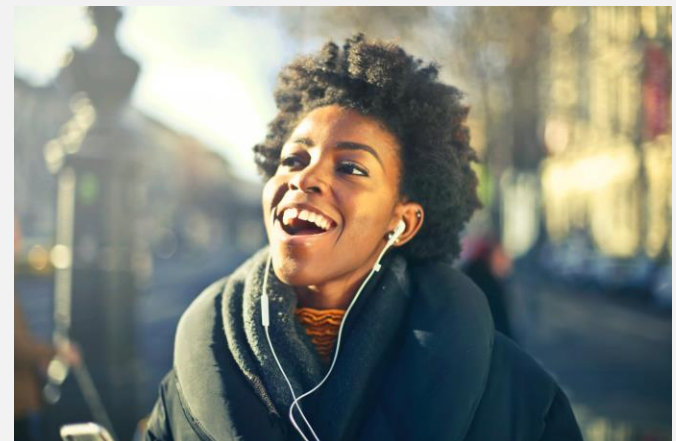
What did you learn? What tips will you apply to improve your listening inside and outside class?

Lecture listening:

Prepare well, take notes efficiently, listen for signal words, and don't panic if you missed something

General listening:

Use free websites with different contexts, find supportive conversation partners, and learn the 'grammar' of intonation



RESOURCES TO HELP

- Free listening websites: esl-lab.com, British Council, ello.org
- Multilingual Student Support (MSS): [Contact your MSS](#) for an English coaching session related to listening

REFERENCES

- Academic Success Center (2023). *Note Taking 101*. Oregon State University.
<https://success.oregonstate.edu/note-taking-101>
- Ockey, G.J., & Wagner, E. (2018). *Assessing L2 listening: Moving towards authenticity*. John Benjamins.
- Oster, M. (2021, 12 October). *Signal words in TOEFL listening*. Best My Test.
<https://www.bestmytest.com/blog/toefl/signal-words-toefl-listening>
- Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching*. Cambridge.